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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BASRAH 000158

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: MAYSAN CIVIC LEADER RECOUNTS ASSASSINATION CAMPAIGN AND  
IRANIAN ACTIONS

REF: (A) BASRAH 47; (B) BASRAH 131

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CLASSIFIED BY: Ken Gross, Regional Coordinator, REO Basrah, DOS.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary. A prominent civic leader in Maysan Province, Abu Muslim al-Saadi, met with the Regional Coordinator (RC) on October 4 and provided details about the growing number of assassinations in his home province. He said that 138 people have been assassinated in al-Amarah, the Maysan capital, in the past two years, most of them independent politicians killed by the Sadr or Badr militias. He expects that the tempo of assassinations will speed up in the coming months because of increased Iranian activity aimed at destabilizing the province, and he views the turnover of security in Maysan to Iraqi control as a long-term goal. End Summary.

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ASSASSINATIONS AND INTIMIDATION ENGULF AL-AMARAH  
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12. (C) A prominent civic leader in Maysan Province and long-time coalition contact, Abu Muslim told the RC on October 4 that assassinations in Al-Amarah, the provincial capital, were increasing at an alarming rate. A former member of the Interim Iraqi National Council and the founder of the al-Huda Foundation for Strategic Studies, which operates programs supporting democracy and encouraging tolerance (see Ref A for background information), Abu Muslim said that 138 people have been assassinated in Al-Amarah in the past two years. He explained that most of the victims fit in certain broad categories: independent members of the government (one example is the local head of intelligence in Maysan - the three persons who have held that office since 2002 have all been killed, and the office is now vacant), former or alleged Ba'ath party members, and persons accused of not following religious strictures (particularly consumers of alcohol and prostitutes). Abu Muslim said the killings reached a crescendo in mid-September when 10 people were assassinated during a one-week span and avers that Sadr and Badr militia members are responsible for the assassinations.

13. (C) A recent and unsettling development, according to Abu Muslim, is that JAM has started patrolling the streets of Al-Amarah and is manning check points parallel to operations conducted by the police force, which is dominated by Badr militia members. This increases the likelihood of further

clashes between JAM and Badr in the city.

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IRAN ACCUSED OF SUPPORTING THE VIOLENCE  
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14. (C) Abu Muslim reported that between 20 and 30 people were assassinated in August and September, and he expects the numbers to rise in the next three months because Iran is contacting members of JAM and Islamic parties to try and enlist their services in five-man assassination squads. In an effort to destabilize Maysan, Abu Muslim said that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps is providing funds, equipment, and instructions to these new assassination cells. He said that JAM and religious party members are being sought so as to not focus attention solely on Badr members. Abu Muslim said that the sources of his information on the increased Iranian influence are trusted close friends who have direct knowledge.

15. (C) Questioned by the RC about Maysan's progress toward achieving Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC), Abu Muslim said that Maysan would not be ready to join its neighboring provinces in of Muthanna and Dhi Qar in having its forces assume security responsibility. Effective PIC requires that Iraqi authorities eliminate weapons from the population, disarm the militias and cleanse the police force of corruption, a process that he said could take many years. The Maysan Provincial Council at present is doing nothing in this regard, according to Abu Muslim.

16. (C) Comment. Abu Muslim has worked closely with coalition forces since CPA days and believes wholeheartedly in the need to educate the Iraqi people about democracy and instill the rule of law. Because he spent several years in Iran studying at religious institutes in Qom, his religious credentials are impeccable. Combined with his fervent support of democratic change in Maysan - and throughout Iraq - he is a much-needed public counterweight to militia-led political infighting common

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in Al-Amarah. His report of the increased assassinations and rise in Iranian influence are especially troubling since he has not been a doomsayer in the past. End comment.  
GROSS